11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

Transport

5.46 The entire coastline of Kerala is well served by the railways. From Trivandrum to Kayankulam and from Tirur to Manjeswar, a total distance of 220 miles, the tracks are only two to three miles from the sea coast. In addition, there is a motorable road running almost all along the entire coastline. Head loads, bicycles, motor lorries, all these modes are employed for the transportation of fish to the markets depending on the distance of the landing sites from the consuming centres.

5.47 The State Fisheries Department operates four insulated vans. In addition, the Department operates two insulated carrier boats, one from Cochin and the other from Azhikode. These boats transport iced-fish through the inland waters to the interior places. For the marketing of fish in the interior areas, the Indo-Norwegian Project operates eight refrigerated vans.

5.48 It is estimated that the State will require about 60 road vehicles and 20 carrier vessels during the next 10 years. The capital expenditure on these is expected to be about Rs. 40 lakhs, of which Rs. 15 lakhs would be required during the Third Plan. The trucks and carrier vessels should, as far as possible, be owned and operated by Fishermen's Cooperative Societies. Expansion of insulated wagon facilities on the railways will be equally necessary. Insulated wagons should be provided on routes connecting the major production centres with the consumption centres.

Marketing

5.49 The marketing of fish in Kerala is not well organized. At present it is controlled by a few moneylenders and fish merchants. The fishermen are very poor and have generally to depend on borrowings during the off season. A departmental survey reveals that in 1958 the fishermen in Kerala had total assets of only about Rs. 30 lakhs against a total debt of Rs. 135 lakhs. Only a small percentage of the fishermen in Kerala own the boats and nets they use. Most of them work as employees under few boat-owner fishermen. In the pay-off period the boat-owner advances small amounts to the fishermen for their day-to-day needs. The catch is auctioned at the landing centres. The bidders include the fish curers, the retailers and lorry owners, who generally supply fish to the retailers.

5.50 Fish prices fluctuate considerably even in the course of the day. Fish is never weighed in the market. They are measured by standards such as heap, basket, and number, and these vary from market to market. The important wholesale fish markets in the State are located at Trivandrum, Kottayam, Tonur, Trichur, Kozhikode, Alwaye, Changanacherry and Athirumpuzha.

5.51 Changanacherry, Athirumpuzha and Vaniyankulam are the most important markets for cured and salted fish. In the coastal areas the consumption of dried fish is confined mostly to the off-season when fishing totally stops. In the interior of the State, owing to lack of transport facilities, cured fish is sold for the major part of the year. The State has a number of retail fish markets, every town or a group of villages having at least one.

5.52 Fish marketing in Kerala requires a great deal of improvement, both